



# Comprehensive Obesity Coverage in Medicare Part D is



## PART D IS AN OUTLIER

While coverage varies, other payers, besides Medicare, recognize obesity as a chronic disease and the important role anti-obesity medications (AOMs) play in improving health, reducing disease, and increasing health equity.

## PATIENTS NEED ACCESS

Medicare patients living with obesity need access to better therapies and medications to allow for safe and effective individualized treatment. AOMs are FDA-approved treatments that have been shown to be highly effective in treating obesity and are critical to the care continuum.

## MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES LOSE COVERAGE

Medicaid and other plans recognize the importance of coverage for AOMs. However, patients lose coverage of the medicines when they enroll in Medicare because Medicare Part D's **interpretation currently** prohibits coverage of FDA-approved AOMs. As Congress and CMS consider modernizing the Medicare Part D program, it is important that Americans have every possible tool to battle obesity.

## Congress and CMS Must Establish Comprehensive Obesity Coverage in Medicare Part D

- **Treat and Reduce Obesity Act:**<sup>9</sup> Bipartisan, bicameral legislation to establish anti-obesity medication coverage through Medicare Part D
- **CMS Guidance:** to establish AOM coverage through revised Part D plan guidance and/or regulation

Obesity is a serious, complex chronic disease that affects **more than 100 million Americans**.<sup>1,2</sup> More than **42% of adults** in the United States live with obesity, **1/3 of whom are over 65 years of age**.<sup>3</sup>

- People living with obesity may develop diseases that affect nearly every area of the body<sup>4</sup>, including **cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension, asthma, and depression**. While in 2024, Medicare has agreed to cover AOMs for those who have had a cardiovascular episode, all other Medicare beneficiaries do not have coverage.
- **Leading medical societies, including the American Medical Association, recognize obesity as a disease** caused by a range of biologic, genetic, and environmental factors—**just like other serious chronic conditions**.
- The leading causes of preventable death in the U.S. are all linked with obesity.
- **4 out of 5 Black and Hispanic women live with obesity** or overweight<sup>5,6</sup>
- When combined with lifestyle intervention, **all drugs currently approved by the FDA for chronic weight management produced greater obesity reduction and sustained the obesity reduction** for a greater length of time.
- Research released in late 2023 demonstrated that obesity treatments can **reduce the risk of heart attacks and strokes by 20 percent** in adults with heart disease and obesity.

1. US Census Bureau. Quick facts: population, census, April 1, 2020. 2. CDC. Adult obesity facts. 3. Hales CM, Carroll MD, Fryar CD, Ogden CL. Prevalence of obesity and severe obesity among adults: United States, 2017-2018. NCHS Data Brief No. 360. February 2020. 4. CDC. Adult obesity causes & consequences. Last updated March 22, 2021. 5. US DHHS. Obesity and African Americans. Last updated March 26, 2020. 6. US DHHS. Obesity and Hispanic Americans. Last updated March 26, 2020. 7. Hales CM, Carroll MD, Fryar CD, Ogden CL. Prevalence of obesity among adults and youth: United States, 2015-2016. NCHS Data Brief No. 288. October 2017. 8. Xcenda. The impact of obesity on COVID-19 outcomes of hospitalizations and mortality. June 2021. 9. S.596 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): Treat and Reduce Obesity Act of 2021. March 4, 2021. 10. Kabiri M, Sexton Ward A, Ramasamy A, et al. Simulating the fiscal impact of anti-obesity medications as an obesity reduction strategy. Inquiry. Jan-Dec 2021;58:46958021990516.